

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	Stucky Road Dumping Site/Shooting Area Clean Up Project
Proposed Implementation Date:	March 2016
Proponent:	DNRC
Location:	T22N R3E section 32(SW4), T21N R3E section 05 (NW4)
County:	Cascade
Trust:	Common Schools

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

DNRC has identified two areas 6 miles northwest of Great Falls, Montana in the Stucky Road area which are being used as dump sites and shooting areas. These areas include a 10.27 acre area in T22N R3E section 32 (SW4) and a 25.75 acre area in T21N R3E section 05 (NW4). Dumped debris includes tires, grass clippings, branches, old appliances, pallets, among other debris. Used targets litter the area as well. Unauthorized motorized use is extensive. The DNRC in a cooperative effort with the current lessees, Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, and community volunteers desire to clean up the area, properly dispose debris, and block unauthorized motorized vehicle use on state land. Limited heavy equipment operations will occur including narrowing approaches from the county road and burying old corrals and other woody debris.

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED:

Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.

Agencies, Groups or Individuals Scoped:	Response:
DNRC, Landowner and Proponent	Proponent in favor of the project.
J & R Gettel Grain Inc. Surface Lessee	Lessee is in favor of the project.
Robert Doran, Surface Lessee	Lessee is in favor of the project.
Brett Logan, Region 4 Wildlife Warden, MT Fish Wildlife & Parks	FWP Law Enforcement-neutral

2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:

DNRC is not aware of any other agencies with jurisdiction or any permits needed.

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Proposed Alternative: To authorize the project to clean up the area and limit unauthorized motor vehicle use, dumping and littering.

No Action Alternative: To not authorize the project to clean up the area and limit unauthorized motor vehicle use, dumping and littering.

III. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- *RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.*
- *Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.*
- *Enter "NONE" if no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.*

4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE:

Consider the presence of fragile, compactable or unstable soils. Identify unusual geologic features. Specify any special reclamation considerations. Identify any cumulative impacts to soils.

The topography of the lands considered in this proposed project consists of gentle rolling pasture and agricultural lands along with rough coulee breaks. According to NRCS soil surveys, soils are composed predominantly of clay.

Proposed Alternative- Impacts from heavy equipment operations to the soils would be temporary and soils are anticipated to return to normal. No impacts to fragile, compactable, or unstable soils or any unusual geologic features are anticipated.

No Action Alternative- No impacts to fragile, compactable, or unstable soils or any unusual geologic features will occur.

5. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION:

Identify important surface or groundwater resources. Consider the potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality. Identify cumulative effects to water resources.

The project area does not contain any significant surface water resources besides a small reservoir filled by precipitation.

Proposed Alternative- No direct or cumulative impacts to water quality are anticipated as a result of the proposed action.

No Action Alternative- No direct or cumulative impacts will occur.

6. AIR QUALITY:

What pollutants or particulate would be produced? Identify air quality regulations or zones (e.g. Class I air shed) the project would influence. Identify cumulative effects to air quality.

In general, this area is considered to be of high quality air standards with good ventilation. Operations may temporarily influence air quality while activities are taking place. When the activity is complete, air quality quickly restores itself to a high standard.

Proposed Alternative- No direct or cumulative effects are expected to occur to air quality as a result of the proposed action.

No Action Alternative- No direct or cumulative impacts will occur.

7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY:

What changes would the action cause to vegetative communities? Consider rare plants or cover types that would be affected. Identify cumulative effects to vegetation.

There are no known rare plants or cover types present. A review of the Natural Heritage data through the NRIS was conducted and there were no plant species of concern or potential species of concern noted on the NRIS survey.

Proposed Alternative- Temporary, small disturbances to plant communities located within the proposed project area would occur. Vegetative communities would not be permanently altered. No impacts to rare plants or cover types are anticipated. No direct or cumulative impacts are anticipated.

No Action Alternative-No direct or cumulative impacts will occur.

8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS:

Consider substantial habitat values and use of the area by wildlife, birds or fish. Identify cumulative effects to fish and wildlife.

These tracts are used by a variety of wildlife to include large ungulates (mule deer, whitetail deer, and antelope), small to large sized predators (weasels, red fox, and coyotes), numerous species of small mammals (mice, voles, ground squirrels, rabbits, etc.), various raptors (red-tailed hawks, golden eagles, American kestrels, prairie falcons, etc.) upland game birds (sharp-tail grouse, Hungarian partridge, and pheasants), waterfowl, and numerous non-game bird species (a wide variety of migrant and resident bird species associated with available habitats).

Proposed Alternative- Habitats would be temporarily disturbed during the installation of the pipeline. No lasting impacts to terrestrial, avian, and/or aquatic life and/or habitats are anticipated.

No Action Alternative- No impacts to terrestrial, avian, and/or aquatic life and habitats will occur.

9. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:

Consider any federally listed threatened or endangered species or habitat identified in the project area. Determine effects to wetlands. Consider Sensitive Species or Species of special concern. Identify cumulative effects to these species and their habitat.

A search of the Montana Natural Heritage Program identified several Species of Concern: Baird's Sparrow, Sprague's Pipit, Long-billed Curlew, Burrowing Owl, American Bittern, Ferruginous Hawk, Chestnut-Collared Longspur, Black Tern, Black-necked Stilt, Loggerhead Shrike, Franklin's Gull, Long-billed Curlew, Black-crowned Night-Heron, White-faced Ibis, Horned Grebe, Forster's Tern, and the Common tern. Two special status species were identified. These include the Bald Eagle and the Red Knot.

Proposed Alternative- None of the area's wildlife would be affected beyond temporary displacement during implementation of the clean-up project. No direct or cumulative impacts are anticipated.

No Action Alternative-No direct or cumulative impacts will occur.

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:

Identify and determine effects to historical, archaeological or paleontological resources.

A Class I (literature review) level review was conducted by the DNRC staff archaeologist for the area of potential effect (APE). This entailed inspection of project maps, DNRC's sites/site leads database, land use records, General Land Office Survey Plats, and control cards. The Class I search revealed that no cultural or paleontological resources have been identified in the APE. Because little ground disturbance is expected with the proposed project, and because the local geology is not likely to produce caves, rock shelters, or sources of tool stone, no additional archaeological investigative work will be conducted. However, if previously unknown cultural or paleontological materials are identified during project related activities, all work will cease until a professional assessment of such resources can be made.

Proposed Alternative- No direct or cumulative effects are expected to occur to historical and archaeological sites as a result of the proposed action.

No Action Alternative-No direct or cumulative impacts will occur.

11. AESTHETICS:

Determine if the project is located on a prominent topographic feature, or may be visible from populated or scenic areas. What level of noise, light or visual change would be produced? Identify cumulative effects to aesthetics.

The proposed project area represents a typical rural farming and ranching community found in this geographic area in Cascade County, Montana.

Proposed Alternative- The state land in this proposal does not provide any unique or scenic qualities. This proposed project will not be visible from any populated areas. Clean up of litter and debris will improve aesthetics. No direct or cumulative effects to the aesthetics are anticipated.

No Action Alternative-No direct or cumulative impacts will occur.

12. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY:

Determine the amount of limited resources the project would require. Identify other activities nearby that the project would affect. Identify cumulative effects to environmental resources.

Proposed Alternative- The demands on environmental resources such as land, water, air, or energy would not be affected by the proposed action. The proposed action will not consume resources that are limited in the area. There are no other projects in the area that will affect the proposed project.

No Action Alternative-No direct or cumulative impacts will occur.

13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA:

List other studies, plans or projects on this tract. Determine cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of current private, state or federal actions in the analysis area, and from future proposed state actions in the analysis area that are under MEPA review (scoped) or permitting review by any state agency.

There are no other projects or plans being considered on the tract listed on this EA.

IV. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.• Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.• Enter "NONE" if no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.

14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:

Identify any health and safety risks posed by the project.

The proposed project would create human health and/or safety risks associated with the clean-up of debris by hand and with heavy equipment.

Proposed Alternative-No impacts to human health or safety are anticipated a result of the proposal.

No Action Alternative-No direct or cumulative impacts will occur.

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:

Identify how the project would add to or alter these activities.

Proposed Alternative- The project would improve range conditions and prevent damage to adjacent agricultural lands.

No Action Alternative-No direct or cumulative impacts will occur.

16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT:

Estimate the number of jobs the project would create, move or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to the employment market.

The project would be completed in a relatively short time frame and will be completed by DNRC and FWP staff, lessees, and community volunteers. Therefore, the project would not create permanent jobs

Proposed Alternative-The proposal is not anticipated to affect the quantity and distribution of employment.

No Action Alternative-No direct or cumulative impacts will occur.

17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES:

Estimate tax revenue the project would create or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to taxes and revenue.

Proposed Alternative- The project would not have any measurable effects to local or state tax revenues.

No Action Alternative- No impacts to the state tax base and/or tax revenues will occur.

18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES:

Estimate increases in traffic and changes to traffic patterns. What changes would be needed to fire protection, police, schools, etc.? Identify cumulative effects of this and other projects on government services

Proposed Alternative-The proposal would not have any impacts on government services.

No Action Alternative-No direct or cumulative impacts will occur.

19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS:

List State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, and other zoning or management plans, and identify how they would affect this project.

The proposed action is in compliance with State and County laws. No other management plans are in effect for the area.

Proposed Alternative- No impacts to local environmental plans and goals are anticipated to occur.

No Action Alternative-No direct or cumulative impacts will occur.

20. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES:

Identify any wilderness or recreational areas nearby or access routes through this tract. Determine the effects of the project on recreational potential within the tract. Identify cumulative effects to recreational and wilderness activities.

This state land is rural, legally accessible, and has fair recreational value. The proposal would not affect authorized recreational activities. Stopping unauthorized recreational activities is a desired outcome.

Proposed Alternative- The proposed action is not anticipated to impact authorized recreational and wilderness activities on this state land.

No Action Alternative- No impacts to the quality of recreational and wilderness activities will occur.

21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING:

Estimate population changes and additional housing the project would require. Identify cumulative effects to population and housing.

Proposed Alternative-The proposal does not include any changes to housing or developments. No direct or cumulative effects to population or housing are anticipated.

No Action Alternative-No direct or cumulative impacts will occur.

22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:

Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.

Proposed Alternative- No native or traditional lifestyles or communities in the vicinity would be impacted by the proposal. No direct or cumulative effects are expected to occur to air quality as a result of the proposed action.

No Action Alternative-No direct or cumulative impacts will occur.

23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:

How would the action affect any unique quality of the area?

The proposed project area represents a typical rural farming and ranching community found in this geographic area in Cascade County, Montana.

Proposed Alternative- The proposed action will not impact the cultural uniqueness or diversity of the area.

No Action Alternative-No direct or cumulative impacts will occur.

24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:

Estimate the return to the trust. Include appropriate economic analysis. Identify potential future uses for the analysis area other than existing management. Identify cumulative economic and social effects likely to occur as a result of the proposed action.

Proposed Alternative- The proposed action should result in improved conditions on grazing and agricultural land. Clean up of litter and debris combined with more secure gates and more narrow approaches will prevent further unauthorized dumping, littering, vandalism, and motorized use in the project area.

No Action Alternative- current conditions would prevail, more debris would accumulate and more damage would occur.

EA Checklist Prepared By:	Name: Casey Kellogg	Date: March 3, 2016
	Title: Land Use Specialist	

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

Proposed Alternative: Approve the project as proposed and authorize DNRC and other cooperators to clean up the area, properly dispose of debris, and block unauthorized motorized vehicle use on state land.

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

This project should have no significant, detrimental impacts or cumulative effects regarding the project area. The clean-up effort will be a long-term benefit to the grazing and agricultural lease on state land and wildlife in the project area. In order to address the minimal ground disturbance, appropriate mitigation measures should occur

which will include washing equipment and vehicles before entering state land, weed control, and re-seeding disturbed areas as necessary with a seed mix recommended by DNRC staff.

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

☐

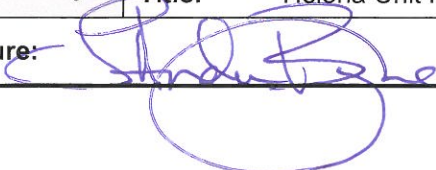
EIS

☐

More Detailed EA

☒

No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By:	Name: Andy Burgoyne
	Title: Helena Unit Manager, Central Land Office
Signature: 	Date: 3/3/16